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Afghanistan Situation Report

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23 April 1985

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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AFGHANISTAN: THE SECULAR RESISTANCE

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Secular resistance groups, whose political views do not closely correspond with the Kabul regime or exile organizations in Peshawar, receive little or no arms or money, are left out of major decisionmaking, and often are forced to operate in secret. Though members are relatively few, secular groups could play an important role in the resistance because some operate in Kabul and they appeal to the Afghan educated elite.

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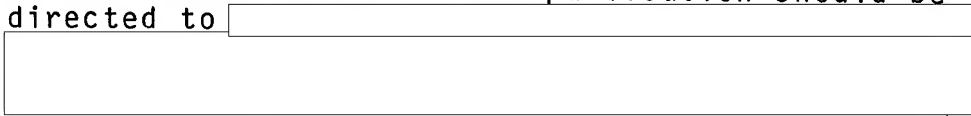
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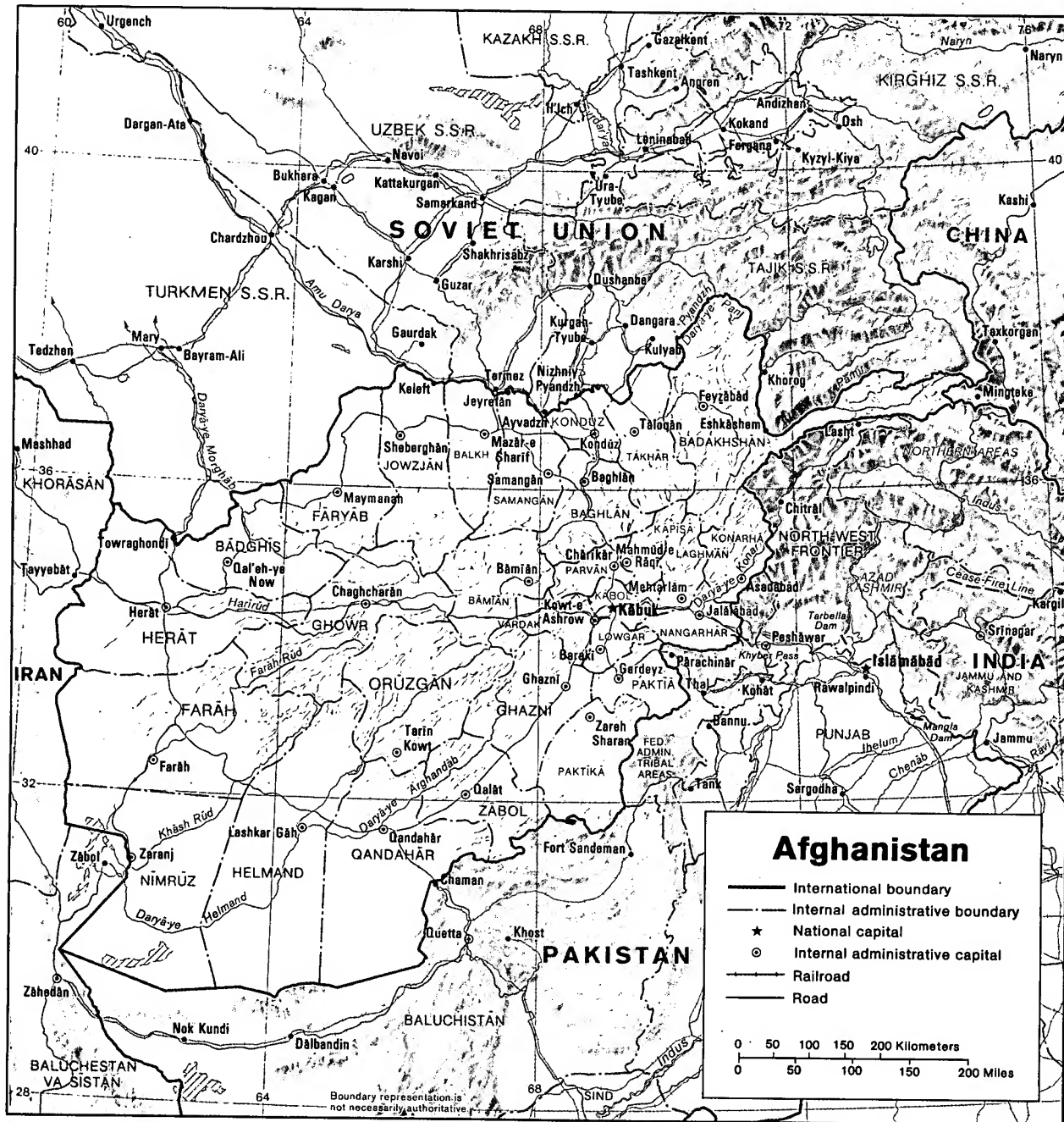


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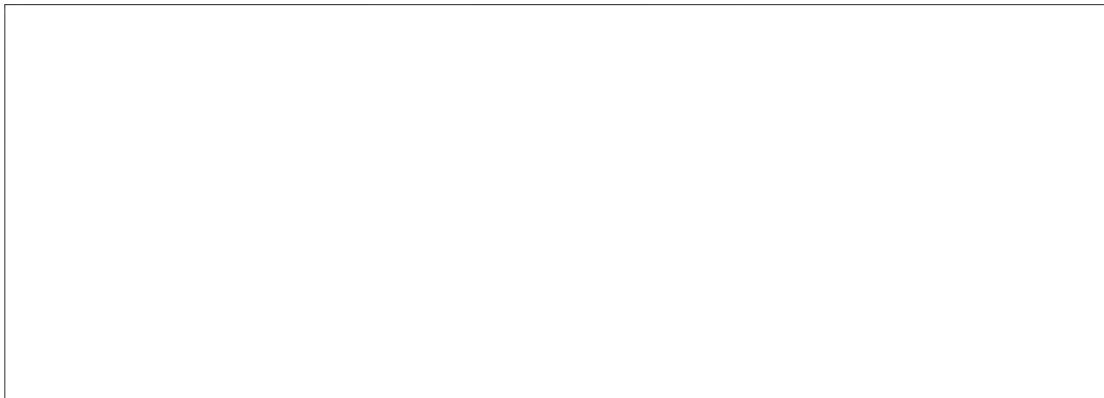
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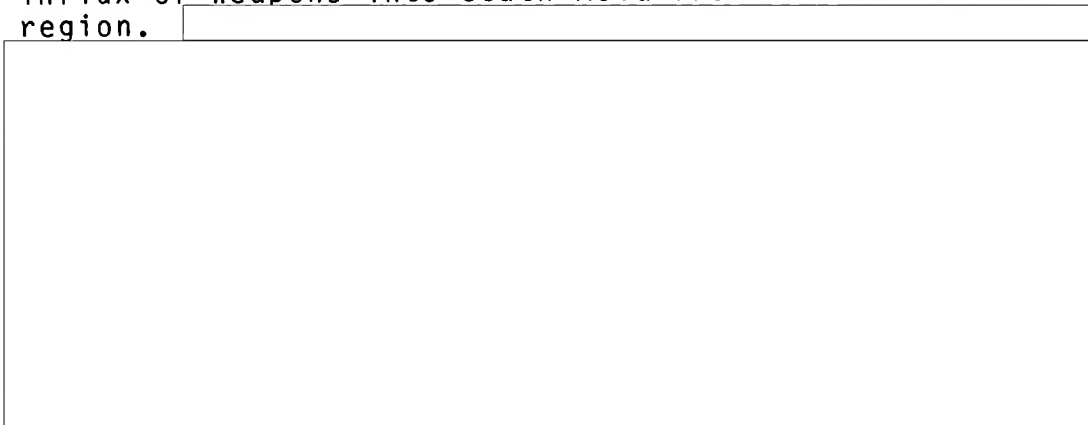


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INDIA-AFGHANISTAN: FOREIGN SECRETARY'S VISIT

Indian Foreign Secretary Bhandari during his goodwill visit to Afghanistan on 12 and 13 April publicly underscored Indo-Afghan friendship and criticized the influx of weapons into South Asia from outside the region.

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Comment: The Indians deny that their recognition of the Babrak Karmal regime confers legitimacy on Babrak's Soviet backers, and even claim that it will ensure Afghanistan's independence and nonalignment if--as they hope--Soviet troops pull out. Foreign aid for the insurgents, in New Delhi's view, makes a Soviet withdrawal less likely. Indian planners also calculate that increased US aid to the insurgents will deepen the US commitment to Pakistan's defense, which New Delhi views as a direct threat to India. This perception, together with India's reliance on Moscow for arms supplies and Moscow's irritation over New Delhi's past diplomatic appeals for a Soviet troop withdrawal, makes the Indians reluctant to confront Moscow publicly on the issue.

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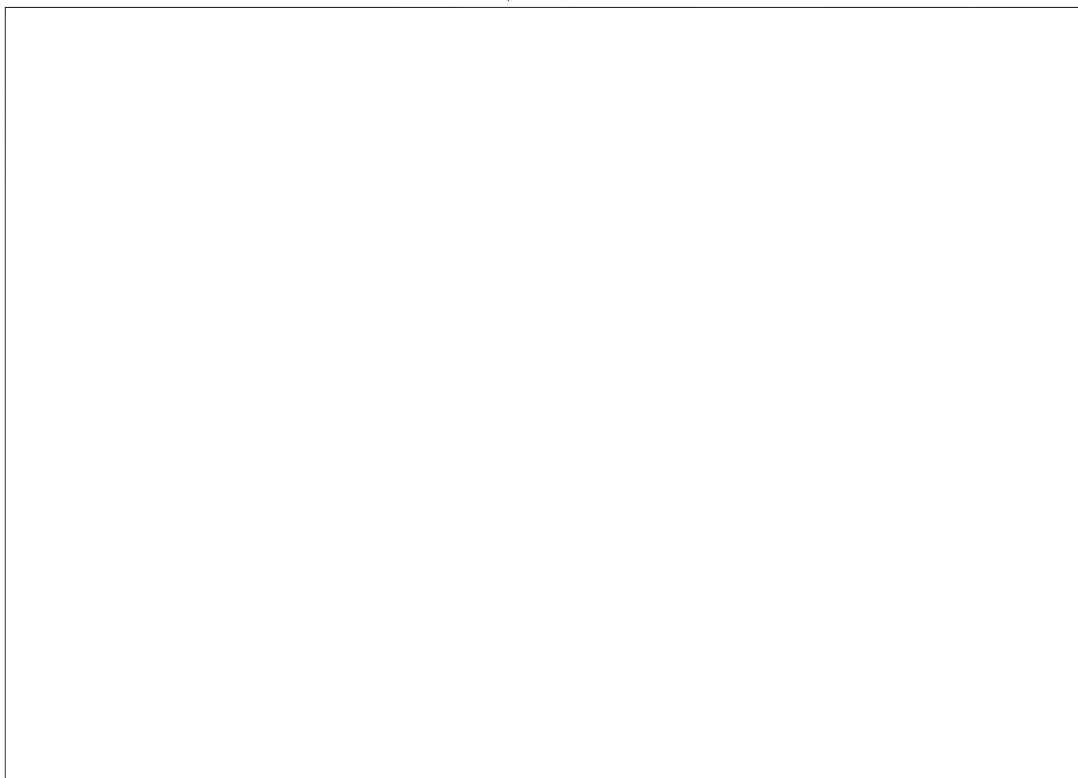


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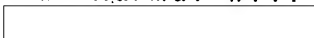


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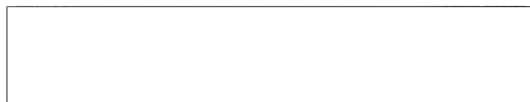
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-- The Soviet Minister Counselor in Kabul told US Embassy officials that Babrak Karmal will visit Poland beginning 16 May. 

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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: THE SECULAR RESISTANCE
by an External Contractor

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Secular Afghan resistance groups in Peshawar, whose political views do not closely correspond with exile organizations recognized by Pakistan, must operate in secret. The secular resistance groups are left out of major decisionmaking, and they receive no arms or money available to other groups. Because they are often suspected of collaborating with the Kabul regime, they operate at best on the fringes of the Islamic groups, and in many cases completely underground, infiltrating the established religious groups.

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Before the Marxist coup, the educated elite in Afghanistan was divided roughly into four groups: Western-oriented intellectuals interested in the development of a Western-style democracy; Soviet-oriented Marxists who espoused a Communist government linked to Moscow; other leftists, including various nonaligned Marxists and socialists; and the Islamic fundamentalists, linked to the Persian Gulf and Iran.

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Leftists

The leftist movement was strong in Afghanistan in the 1960s and early 1970s. Perhaps the largest group was the **Shola-i-Javaid**, whose ideological commitment was variously called nonaligned, Marxist, Maoist, reformist, and nationalist. Of various ideological bents the groups were especially popular among non-Pushtuns, who constituted much of the urban elite, and non-Sunni religious groups, especially the Shiites. Their power peaked in 1972 at Kabul University when they led a series of large strikes and controlled the student government. Other leftist groups were also active at that time, including the anti-Pushtun **Setim-i-Melli**.

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With the ouster of Zahir Shah by Daoud in 1973, these secular groups were forced underground, as Daoud favored the Khalq and Parcham Marxist groups. Many of the members of these groups were jailed during the period of Daoud or when the Communists took over in

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1978. Others no doubt joined the Khalqi or the Parchami party, and still others fled and are still active abroad, primarily in Germany. [REDACTED]

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Despite the severe decrease in their numbers through capture, death, or exile, and despite the passage of time, some elements from this movement are active today in Kabul. The old groups have largely reorganized or split. The largest of these groups is the alliance **Sazman-i-Azadibakhsh-i-Mardum-i-Afghanistan**, SAMA (The Organization for the Freedom of the Afghan People). Other groups include **Sazman-i-Rehail** (The Organization for Deliverance) and **Jabha-i-Motahed-Melli** (The National United Front). All have members inside and outside Afghanistan and claim to have some success as guerrillas. Their military operations occur primarily in the major cities, especially Kabul. They have also been active in some rural areas and in the north in general, as well as in the Shomali area near Kabul.

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These groups are aware that they must not repeat the mistakes of the Khalqis and Parchamis, alienating the people ideologically. Thus, they have reorganized, changed names, and modified their positions to omit mention of socialism or Marxism and now stress humanistic values. These secular leftist groups are not simply the nonaligned Marxists from the 1960s, although they tend to attract the educated as did their predecessors, with members coming from Kabul University, high schools, and middle level civil service ranks. Educated Kabulis who wish to actively oppose the present regime and the Soviet occupiers may not be attracted to the religious mujahedin groups. These secular groups thus may tap some of this support and also appeal to those who resent the Pushtun-dominated resistance--thus, their support in non-Pushtun northern Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

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Reports on the numbers and activities of these groups are hard to assess, given their secrecy and propensity to give misinformation. They do seem, however, to have success as **chariks** or urban guerrillas. They excel at such things as bombings and assassinations, operations that require few men but precise timing and planning. While their numbers are small, they are well organized and tend to approach their selected targets with care. [REDACTED]

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They also have attempted to bring the Afghan situation to world attention. One of the groups, **Jabha-i-Motahed-i-Melli**, tried to block the seating of the official Afghan delegation at the meeting of Nonaligned Nations in Delhi in 1983. Their efforts included trying to have a document condemning the brutalities of the present regime read into the minutes of that meeting. [redacted]

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These groups, primarily SAMA, represent a potential force in the war. In Peshawar neither the fundamentalist nor the moderate alliance strikes deep cords of sympathy among educated Afghans. Although these secular groups will never have much of a tribal or rural following, they could appeal to the educated class in Afghanistan if their ideological connection with the left is muted. This educated class is now largely ignored both as refugees and as mujahedin. [redacted]

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Nationalists

The nationalist movement also had its start during the 1960s and was popular among the older, more traditionally educated Afghans, mainly government officials and businessmen. They favored a modern parliamentary democracy in Afghanistan along a European model, and many were influenced by Germany and its social democracy. The groups included **Masawat** (Equality); the party of the popular Prime Minister Maiwandwal, **Afghan Mellat** (Afghan Nation); and several splinter groups from these. **Afghan Mellat**, the most popular and durable, favors Pushtun nationalism and was associated with the greater Pushtunistan issue. Its following seems to be among educated Pushtuns from eastern Afghanistan, especially the Jalalabad area. Many of the followers of these groups were also imprisoned or killed when the Communists took over, but some reached an accommodation with the Communist government that lasted until 1983. [redacted]

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These groups no longer have much following in Afghanistan, but they still are active among the exiles in Pakistan, especially among certain professional groups. Three groups are active in Peshawar, each having split from the original **Afghan Mellat**. Each has its own newspaper and makes exaggerated claim to a following of several thousand. The narrowness of their ideology, their brief but damaging collaboration with

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[REDACTED]

the present regime, and their past connection with socialism have made them ineffective. [REDACTED]

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Many of the members of **Afghan Mellat** are former high officials from the rule of Zahir Shah and have close connection with several of the moderate mujahedin groups, primarily Gailani's. The **Mellat** group, considered the most leftist of these national movements, has some following among the Afghan Doctors Association. The ADA has operated clinics in Afghanistan and Pakistan for Afghan refugees and has some influence in Peshawar. Although the **Mellat** faction of the nationalists is the smallest, it is also the most radical and best organized. [REDACTED]

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Conclusion

There are cracks in the present structure of the Afghan resistance. While the Marxist government now in power has little popular support, there is also no great support for the Peshawar-based insurgent leaders. Many educated Afghans, especially the urbanites, now feel left out of the struggle. While they may detest the present regime, they are not drawn to the official mujahedin groups. Most are secular in the sense that they prefer a form of government that is free of religious dogma. The leftists have been active in the resistance, but they receive little or no arms and supplies and are often attacked by the official groups. They may amount to only a few thousand, but given their presence in Kabul and their social position as the educated elite, their participation could be important in the war to liberate Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

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